

April 18th, 2022

## **Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) Statement on Federal Oil Gas Leasing Reform Announcement**

“We appreciate efforts of the Department of Interior to be more thoughtful with these new oil and gas lease sales by updating the antiquated royalty rate, including the social cost of GHG emissions in the leasing decision process and prioritizing tribal consultation and community outreach. However, resuming leasing without broader and more meaningful reform of our country’s broken oil and gas program will continue business as usual and add to the bankruptcies, forfeitures, and new generations of orphaned wells across the country. We want to remind the administration that there is no legal mandate for BLM to issue new leases. While the industry is enjoying near-record [profits](#) and sitting on [millions of acres of unused leases](#), this is the time for the administration to require oil and gas companies to internalize the real costs of oil and gas extraction. This includes increasing the inadequate financial assurances and bonding, eliminating the leasing of non-competitive and low potential lands, and closing the idle well loophole which allows companies to dodge their clean-up obligations. Adjusting bonding for the real cost of plugging wells and remediating sites means the cost of that work won’t continue to fall on the American people. ”

*-Barbara Vasquez, a leader with the Western Organization of Resource Councils from Cowdrey, Colorado*

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*[The Western Organization of Resource Councils \(WORC\)](#) is a network of grassroots organizations that span seven Western states with more than 15,000 members. Many WORC members live on lands overlying and neighboring federal, tribal, state and privately owned oil and gas deposits, and experience numerous impacts due to federal oil and gas production. Headquartered in Billings, Montana, WORC also has offices in Colorado and Washington, D.C.*